

Commentary on 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 6.9.24

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

May memory verse Romans 6:8 (NKJV)

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

June memory verse Romans 6:9 (NKJV)

knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

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Let's turn to first Thessalonians chapter five. But of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety: then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, [and here's the key] are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief (1Th 5:1-4).

The day of the Lord is coming. Jesus referred to His coming as a thief in the night. But Paul is saying, "You are the children of the light, so that that day should not overtake you as a thief." I believe that the Lord intended us to be knowledgeable of Bible prophecy, and thus knowledgeable of the signs of His coming. And certainly, there are interesting signs of His coming in the world today. Israel existing as a nation: tremendous sign of the coming again of Jesus Christ. Europe gathered together in a community of ten nations: an interesting sign of the return again of Jesus Christ. The capacity of man to destroy himself off of the planet earth: another sign for "except those days be short and no flesh would remain, but for the elect sake, they shall be shortened."

The development of electronic funds transfers, the development of an I.D. system now putting a computer chip upon a card that can store all kinds of information, even record and keep in memory every transaction that you've made with the card; being used now in Europe, being tested in France, used in Europe as a possible model for a worldwide monetary system. And the talk of taking that same computer chip, because the cards are lost and stolen, and implanting it within a person's wrist. So a mark, an identity where people buy and sell with that mark and identity. "The times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. You know He's coming as a thief, but you are not the children of darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief."

You are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober (1Th 5:5-6).

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Now, as Jesus talked in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew concerning His coming again, there were two things that He emphasized on into chapter twenty-five. One, watch; two, be ready. Paul here is emphasizing watch, be sober. And so, I do believe that it is the intent of the Lord that His church in all ages live in anticipation of His imminent return, and the two things they should do are, number one, be watching and number two, they should be ready.

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not appointed us to wrath [Praise the Lord!], but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (1Th 5:6-9),

God's wrath is going to come upon the earth. Jesus said, quoting from Daniel, "And there shall be a time of great tribulation, such as the world has never seen before or ever see again." And from the book of Revelation, from chapter six through eighteen, we have details of that great judgment of God that will be coming upon the earth. But, this great judgment that is coming in the book of Revelation is called, in the book of Revelation, the day of His wrath, "the wrath of His indignation being poured forth as the rich men and the kings of all of the earth call unto the rocks and the mountains to hide them from the face of the Lamb and from His judgment. For the day of His wrath has come and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:16)

As far as the church is concerned, Jesus said, "In this world you'll have tribulation" (John 16:33). But Jesus identifies Satan as the culprit behind the tribulation that the child of God experiences living on this alien world. But the Bible definitely identifies the source of the great tribulation as being God in His judgment as He comes to judge those who are dwelling upon the earth. And when the wrath of God is poured out... we have not been appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord. And that is why we should be watching, and we should be sober. Jesus said that that day is going to come and catch many as a snare. And so pray that you will always be accounted worthy to escape these things that are gonna be coming to pass upon the earth, and to be standing upon... before the Son of Man, for as a snare it shall come upon the earth. And therefore, he warns us against drunkenness, against surfeiting, against living after the flesh, that we be caught unaware. And so the same message of watching, be sober, be diligent.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him (1Th 5:9-10).

And that is the whole thing, whether dead or alive, I'm going to be living together with Him. That's what Jesus was talking about when He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the light. He that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and if you live and believe in Me, you'll never die" (John 11:25). I'm never gonna die. I'm gonna always live for Jesus and with Jesus, and whether, you know, in this

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body or in my new body, I'm gonna be living with Him. So, as Paul said, "Whether we wake or sleep, we are living together with Him in one form or the other, in this body or my new one. I won't die; I will be living together with Him."

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify [build up] one another, even as you do (1Th 5:11).

And so the building up of one another in Christ, the encouraging of one another in the Lord.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you (1Th 5:12);

So, those that God has chosen to have the oversight of the body of Christ, to minister to them and admonish them in the truth of God. Paul said,

And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly (1Th 5:13-14),

Now he's gonna give us a bunch of little exhortations here.

Warn those that are unruly (1Th 5:14),

You see a person that is not living right, warn him. God called Ezekiel to warn him, and told him the importance of his ministry of warning those unrighteous people, and those righteous who had turned on their righteousness.

comfort the feebleminded (1Th 5:14),

We have a tendency many times to become annoying with the feebleminded. You know, to pass them off. But we are told here we ought to be comforting the feebleminded. God bless them, man. You know, our hearts should be going out to them and we should be patient and seek to comfort them, rather than being brisk and short.

support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man (1Th 5:14-15);

Oh, isn't that difficult? How we love to get even, but see that we don't.

but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1Th 5:15-18).

Again, I would call attention to the fact it doesn't say, "*For* everything give thanks." That would be hypocritical. I cannot honestly give thanks for a lot of things, but I can give thanks in them. I can't give thanks, really, for the problems that I face, but I can give

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thanks in the problems. I don't give thanks for the trials, but I give thanks to God in the trials. If I've lost everything, I don't thank God for the fact that I've lost everything, but I thank God in the losses, not for the losses, because I know that God is control of my life. I know that God is controlling those things that happen to me because I've committed my life to Him and I know that God loves me. And I know that God is working out a wise plan in my life, and He is wiser than I. And I know that God can see the long term, where all I can see is the short term. And so, in everything that happens to me, because God is controlling those happenings, because God is governing my life, I give thanks to God in everything; that He loves me, that He's in control, that He is guiding the things of my life, and that He's gonna work out His good eternal plan and purposes in me. "In everything give thanks."

Quench not the Spirit (1Th 5:19).

Now, a lot of people use this scripture to tolerate all kinds of foolishness going on within the body of Christ. You know, someone screaming outlandishly and running up and down the isles screaming and all. They justify their behavior by saying "the Bible says, 'Quench not the Spirit.'" Well, that's not what Paul's talking about. There is a spirit that is to be quenched: the human spirit.

We are told grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. How is the Holy Spirit grieved? How do we quench the Spirit? You know one of the greatest quenches of the Spirit is a lack of love? That's how we quench the Spirit. The Spirit's work in our hearts and in our lives can be hindered by bitter feelings, by hatred, and jealousy, and animosity, and those kind of feelings; that's what quenches the work of the Spirit within your life. And so, it's really talking about that work of God's Spirit within your life, don't quench it. The fruit of the Spirit, you see, is love, and that is what the Spirit is speaking to, is seeking to produce in you is that love. Don't quench the Spirit, open up to love. Open up to be an instrument of love. Open up to be a channel of God's love. Release yourself to love.

A lot of times we have a hesitancy in this because we've been burned in the past. We've been hurt. I loved them and then they rejected me, and we feel so rejected that we begin to close up and we won't open up to love. And as we close up and tighten up we're actually quenching the Spirit. "Quench not the Spirit."

Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things (1Th 5:20-21);

And, of course, with prophecy, that is necessary to be proved. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14, "When one prophesies, let the others judge." And so, it is tied together here, "Despise not prophesyings. And yet prove all things."

Prove all things. Someone gives you a prophecy, just don't accept it. Prove it. Don't despise it, though. And I get a lot of... I get a lot of, "Thus saith the Lords," and a lot of mail, and a lot of people feel that God has used them as a channel to speak to me. And I want to be open. God knows my heart; I want to be open. There are a lot of times, you know, you get sort of burned on these things. You say, "Aw, I..." and you don't even

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bother to read them, because there's a certain kind of a pattern to them all. And yet, I don't want to despise prophecy. I want to be open. I want God to be able to speak to me through ever... I can recognize, I accept that God can use others to speak to me, and I am open to God speaking to me. However, I want God to speak to me however He wants to speak to me.

But on the other hand, I feel that it is incumbent that I do prove all things and then, hold fast that which is good (1Th 5:21).

I think that this is Chuck Missler's sort of motto in every speech. He just says, "Hey, I'm gonna say a lot of wild stuff, and I don't want you to believe anything I say. I want you to prove all things, and then hold fast that which is true. Be like the Bereans, 'More noble than those in Thessalonica, and that they went and searched the scriptures to see if these things be of God.'" Prove all things, and then hold fast that which is good.

Here's an important one:

Abstain from all appearance of evil (1Th 5:22).

I love this sparkling apple juice. And now Treetop has come out with Sparkling Apple Juice, but they put it in these large green bottles, you know, with the gold foil at the top and all. And I hate to buy it, because I'm afraid someone will see me checking out and say, "Oh, he's buying wine or champagne," or something, you know, because of the bottle that they put it in. So, sort of a dilemma. I want to abstain from all appearances of evil.

I do think we need to be very sensitive on the appearances of things, to shun the appearances of evil. There are those couples that often come and say, "Well, we're living together in the same house, but we're not sleeping together." Well, who knows? You know, the neighbors, surely they don't know, and it has the appearance of evil. And we are told, and I think we need to abstain from all... even the appearances of evil. We don't want to stumble anybody.

And the very God of peace sanctify [set you apart] wholly [or completely]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved (1Th 5:23)

Notice, Paul recognizes the tricotomy of man: your whole spirit, your whole soul, and your whole body. The three parts of man's being: body, soul, consciousness and spirit. Spirit, which is dead, until we receive the Lordship of Jesus Christ and we are made alive. Once dead in trespasses and sins, but now alive unto God through the Spirit. The spirit is come alive.

Now, psychology and humanism in the universities today teach the dichotomy of man. They teach that the soul and spirit of man are synonymous. It is only those who have been born again by the Spirit of God and experience the spiritual life are trichotomists,

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and the reason why we are trichotomist is because our spirit has come alive, and we know that the spirit of man is separate and distinct from the consciousness of man.

But the natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit, and neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. So try to argue this with a natural man and you get nowhere. He has no way of understanding, no way of comprehending. And the Lord brought me to this after several arguments with the college professor in my sociology class on the subject of the soul and the spirit being separate entities, distinct. And he was a dichotomist, a humanist, and we went round and round until one day, as I went out of the class talking to myself about that poor ignorant man, the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "Look, you're trying to teach him something he cannot know." The natural man cannot understand the things of the spirit neither can he know them. They are spiritually discerned.

It is only when you're alive in the spirit that you can understand the things of the spirit, the realm of the spirit. And so, those who are natural, trying to approach the Word of God with a natural wisdom and understanding, become confused when you get to the realm of the spirit. But he which is spiritual understands all things.

So, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Th 5:23).

That is your whole man. God, preserve me physically, my body. God, preserve my mind, my consciousness. And God, preserve my spirit, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it (1Th 5:24).

Oh, how glorious to be called of God, because God is faithful, and having begun a good work in us, He will continue to perform it.

Brethren, pray for us (1Th 5:25).

In almost all of his epistles, Paul was asking the people to pray for him as he mentioned how he prays for them. And that's what the body of Christ is all about: bearing one another's burdens, and fulfilling the law of Christ, praying one for another.

Brethren, pray for us. And greet all the brethren with a holy kiss (1Th 5:25-26).

I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren (1Th 5:27).

So we really sort of obeyed the commandment here in reading this epistle to all of you holy brethren.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen (1Th 5:28).